

**North Warwickshire Local Plan Examination**  
Position Statement on behalf of IM Properties

**Matter 3: Housing Needs and Requirements**

August 2018

**Turley**

# Contents

---

1.	Introduction	1
2.	Response to Issues and Questions	3

---

# 1. Introduction

- 1.1 This statement is submitted on behalf of IM Properties Development Ltd (IM Properties) to the North Warwickshire Local Plan Examination.
- 1.2 It follows representations submitted to the Draft Local Plan consultation in March 2017 and to the Draft Submission Local Plan consultation in March 2018 (hereafter referred to as the 'March 2017 representations' and the 'March 2018 representations' respectively).
- 1.3 IM Properties is a privately owned Midlands-based company located near Coleshill and has a strong track record for bringing forward high-quality developments across the region. It has invested £750m in development projects across the Midlands and has an investment portfolio of £900m alongside a £1bn residential land portfolio. IM Properties' record of working closely with local authorities on major developments includes Birch Coppice Business Park within North Warwickshire, which has been transformed from a disused colliery and developed to the highest standards of building design, park infrastructure, landscaping, amenities and management.
- 1.4 IM Properties also controls 70 hectares of land to the west of Junction 9 of the M42/M6 Toll, within North Warwickshire. The site was submitted to the Borough Council's Call for Sites in 2015, and provides an exceptional opportunity for a major new employment development to meet a well evidenced, significant and pressing need for strategic employment sites in this location.
- 1.5 The site is situated within the heart of the M42 corridor and benefits from excellent access to the strategic road network, proximity to labour supply and access to intermodal facilities. It can make a substantial contribution to the jobs, investment and growth agenda of the regions' Local Enterprise Partnerships (LEPs) and the West Midlands Combined Authority, and the wider objectives of the Midlands Engine Strategy.
- 1.6 Our March 2017 and March 2018 representations set out significant concerns with the emerging plan, and these concerns remain in respect of the Local Plan Submission (March 2018) [CD0/1]. The key issues which form the focus of our representations to the Examination are as follows:
  - The failure of the Plan to recognise the strong economic need for additional strategic employment land in the Borough to address the significant and growing unmet need and demand at a sub-regional level, and within the M42 corridor more specifically;
  - The spatial strategy which has been selected without first understanding the appropriate housing and employment needs to plan for, and which has been unduly influenced by seeking to protect the Green Belt, rather than a consideration of the most sustainable strategy for directing growth; and
  - Allied to our concerns above, the significant and substantive procedural shortcomings with the Sustainability Appraisal, including issues arising from the

failure to prepare a revised SA Scoping Report at the outset of the process, failure to carry out and consult upon an SA of the strategic Growth Options at the appropriate time, the failure to assess the preferred growth option and reasonable alternatives and the erroneous treatment of Green Belt as an environmental constraint.

- 1.7 This statement responds to Matter 3 of the Examination, in particular the relationship between housing and employment policies.
- 1.8 The Local Plan Submission (March 2018) [CD0/1] acknowledges the importance of ensuring that housing and employment policies are integrated. To this end it is recognised that the Local Plan has drawn upon an evidence base which considers the relationship between jobs and homes. This evidence base also recognises that North Warwickshire does not represent a self-contained Housing Market Area (HMA) or a Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA).
- 1.9 Within our March 2017 and March 2018 representations we identified concerns that in interpreting this evidence base the Draft Submission Local Plan [CD1/1] had adopted an unjustified narrow or constrained view as to the need to ensure a 1:1 balance between jobs and houses in the consideration of the allocation of strategic employment sites. It is our view, and one which is supported by NWBC's own evidence, that by their nature these sites are strategic and therefore the extent to which they draw upon labour, which in turn requires housing, should not be constrained to a single authority. It should not, therefore, be viewed as a justification for side-stepping the responsibility of the authority to contribute towards providing the strategic employment sites which are required across the functional market area.
- 1.10 We have not commented in detail on the soundness of the evidence base underpinning the housing OAN in its entirety and our response to the questions posed under this matter are focussed on this specific aspect of NWBC's evidence base and its interpretation into policy.
- 1.11 On the basis of this aspect, which also links across to our statement for Matter 5, IM Properties maintain, therefore, that the Local Plan Submission (March 2018) [CD0/1] is unsound against the tests set by the NPPF.
- 1.12 We have requested to appear at the Examination in respect of Matter 3.

## 2. Response to Issues and Questions

**Q3.2 In respect of OAHN the LP is based primarily on a Strategic Housing Market Assessment covering CWHMA authorities. Is the SHMA an appropriate evidence base?**

**a) What is the effect of 2014-based household projections?**

2.1 IM Properties reserve the right to consider and respond to any response made by NWBC to respond to the invitation made by the Inspector in INSP2 to reflect on the consequences of this dataset. It is assumed that this would be undertaken in the context of the evidence presented within the Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study which included an assessment of needs across the Greater Birmingham HMA using these projections.

**b) Are the findings of the SHMA consistent with those of the GBHMA Strategic Growth Study published in February 2018. If not, what are the reasons for any differences?**

2.2 No. North Warwickshire has been identified as forming a component part of the Coventry and Warwickshire HMA as well as the Greater Birmingham HMA. This means its housing needs have been assessed in the context of both HMAs.

2.3 The GBHMA Strategic Growth Study (SGS) takes into account updated demographic and economic evidence to that presented in the CWSHMA. This recognises that the SGS was published in 2018 where the last update to the CWSHMA was published in 2015.

2.4 In its assessment of future housing need the SGS establishes the implications of realising the positive growth ambitions of the WMCA. These post-date the CWSHMA and were therefore not considered as part of its conclusions on the housing need in the HMA. It is noted that based on supporting the stated economic ambitions of the WMCASEP the SGS concludes that there is the need for the provision of some 246,000 homes across the Greater Birmingham HMA (and therefore including North Warwickshire) to 2031.

2.5 It is acknowledged that the SGS was published in final form whilst the Draft Submission Local Plan [CD1/1] was being consulted upon and therefore provided a challenge in integrating its findings within the evidence base. It is also recognised that the published document does not include a disaggregation of need by local authority and on the basis of the published evidence a comparison with the scale of need concluded within the CW SHMA is not directly possible. It is understood, however, that the Council were aware of the study and its initial conclusions from September 2017. It is therefore unreasonable that the Council has not provided a sufficiently justified consideration of its implications for the Draft Plan's housing policies.

**c) Are student numbers appropriately assessed in the SHMA?**

2.6 No comment.

**Q3.3 LP table 2, consistent with the SHMA, sets out that the overall OAHN for NWBC is 237 homes annually to 2031. Is that robust?**

**a) With reference to INSP2, does that figure take account of local planning authorities' or Local Enterprise Partnership economic policies?**

- 2.7 No.
- 2.8 IM Properties note the reference made by the Inspector in INSP2 that the SHMA (2015) which underpins the OAHN expressly confirms that it does not take account of economic growth objectives identified by local planning authorities' or the LEP.
- 2.9 North Warwickshire is located within two Housing Market Area's (HMA), Greater Birmingham and Coventry & Warwickshire. Its future needs are also shaped by complex economic geographies with the borough falling within the Coventry & Warwickshire Functional Economic Market Area (FEMA) but also strongly influenced by the economic area centred upon Birmingham. This presents an important context for considering the housing and employment land needs in the borough which are inevitably strongly influenced by geographic areas which are larger than North Warwickshire
- 2.10 It is agreed that in accordance with the appropriate PPG the OAHN need not take into account policy objectives or aspirations. It is, however, important to acknowledge in the translation of the evidence of need into policy (i.e. the requirement) that across the wider economic areas the LEPs and Combined Authority have expressly set out a clear ambition to deliver additional job growth. Realising this job growth is dependent upon the identification of a sufficient supply of employment land alongside housing to support a growth in the labour-force.
- 2.11 IM Properties are promoting a strategic employment site which responds to an identified need for such land within evidence referenced in the Draft Local Plan. In its representations to date IM Properties has sought to stress that with regards to the location of such a site within North Warwickshire its 'larger-than-local' status with regards to its role in meeting a strategic sub-regional need would mean that it would not be expected that labour associated with the employment created would be sourced exclusively from within the borough.
- 2.12 In turn it would not therefore follow that the OAHN would need to directly correlate with the implied employment growth associated with the provision of such a site. A more fluid relationship would be appropriate to consider in the context of the wider approach to sub-regional planning outside of the draft Plan, as recognised in the Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study (SGS)<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.13 It is of note that the SGS identifies 'east of Birmingham' as a suitable (preferred) strategic location for employment-led housing development. This would therefore support, in terms of providing for the homes that are needed within an appropriate

---

<sup>1</sup> GL Hearn and Wood Plc (2018) Greater Birmingham HMA Strategic Growth Study. At paragraph 1.8 of the Executive Summary this study confirms: '*housing need is a strategic issue which the HMA authorities need to collaborate in addressing through the Duty to Cooperate*'.

HMA / strategic level, IM Properties promotion of the inclusion of a strategic employment site in North Warwickshire.

- 2.14 IM Properties are therefore keen to confirm their position that the Local Plan Submission (March 2018) [CD0/1] should not be prohibited from correctly identifying the provision of further strategic employment sites on the basis that associated housing needs must be met in their entirety within the authority.

**3.6 LP table 1 indicates that 940 homes of the proposed LP housing requirement are attributable to 'economic uplift' from the CWHMA and GBHMA in a 35% / 65% split (320 and 620 homes). With reference to INSP2, is that approach consistent with the approach to establishing OAHN set out in the NPPF 2012 and PPG?**

**a) What is the basis for the relative apportionment between the CWHMA and GBHMA?**

- 2.15 No comment.

**b) Is it accurate to describe 500 of those 940 homes as 'redistributed' from Tamworth Borough Council ('TBC')? If not, how should any previous and future housing delivery in NWBC relate to unmet needs of TBC within the context of the GBHMA and the previous commitment in the CS?**

- 2.16 It is not accurate to describe 500 of the 940 homes as being 'redistributed' from Tamworth into North Warwickshire.
- 2.17 As the Inspector has set out in INSP2 the OAN includes uplifts linked to economic growth and improving affordability which are attributed to future needs arising in North Warwickshire. These cannot be conflated with accommodating 'unmet' needs arising in another authority and is the result of an inconsistent application of the methodology for calculating OAHN.
- 2.18 A commitment to accommodate unmet need from Tamworth should be treated as separate and additional to the OAN. Tamworth falls within the GBHMA and unmet needs should be considered in the context of an attributing of unmet needs from Birmingham and other parts of the HMA. As referenced by the Inspector in INSP2, however, it is unclear as to the extent to which Tamworth's unmet needs in relation to North Warwickshire and Birmingham have been correctly attributed as part of the derivation of the Greater Birmingham shortfall within the Greater Birmingham HMA SGS. It is considered for the purpose of deriving the housing requirement for North Warwickshire on this basis that it should be considered as additional and separate to the allowance made to meet Birmingham's needs.
- 2.19 The labelling of the meeting of needs associated with GBHMA as 'aspirational' rather than a commitment therefore means that the Local Plan Submission (March 2018) [CD0/1] currently makes no allowance for the unmet needs of Tamworth or indeed those arising from the GBHMA.

### **3.8 In establishing the overall housing requirement, has appropriate account been taken of the wider economic context to NWBC, including HS2?**

- 2.20 No. IM Properties is concerned that in the derivation of the planned provision for housing and employment land in Policy LP6 that insufficient account has been given of the evolving wider economic context which has been articulated by the CWLEP and the WMCA. We expand upon our concerns on this matter in relation to employment land in response to the questions posed under Matter 5. In these, we also raise a concern that the Local Plan Submission (March 2018) [CD0/1] is insufficiently positive in its consideration of wider economic investments including HS2.
- 2.21 We note in this context that the failure to sufficiently account for the latest sub-regional economic context and in particular the objective of supporting economic growth was made by the CWLEP in its Regulation 19 response (SLP288). This asserted that: *'the CWLEP notes that the draft plan fails to acknowledge the growth context set by both the Coventry and Warwickshire SEP (updated 2016) and the proposals set out in the WMCA Strategic Economic Plan 2016. In this sense the Plan lacks ambition and needs to reflect the wider economic growth ambitions for the region as a whole.'*
- 2.22 As raised within INSP2, Policy LP6 introduces a significant degree of ambiguity as to the level of housing which is both required and will be delivered in its labelling of provision beyond that meeting 'local needs' (5,808, noting this includes unmet needs from Coventry) as being 'aspirational'. This approach is unsound. As a minimum it is clearly critical for NWBC to plan for the needs which it has identified as being required to contribute to addressing evidenced unmet needs across the wider housing market and economic geography. In the context of the clear stated economic objectives of the LEP and the WMCA any other approach would present a real challenge to their delivery.
- 2.23 It is recognised that aspects of economic strategy continue to emerge and be refined in detail and that would also be expected to have more significant implications beyond the first half of the plan-period. However, it is not acceptable for the Local Plan, in taking such an insular position, to adopt a position which is insufficiently positive in planning for growth with regards to both housing and in the view of IM Properties more importantly employment land aspects under Policy LP6. The consequences of a failure of NWBC to adopt a sufficiently positive policy approach in this regards will mean that businesses will not be able to invest and will be detrimental to achieving the stated economic objectives of the LEP.

**Turley Office**  
1 New York Street  
Manchester  
M1 4HD

T 0161 233 7676

**Turley**